**Office of Professional Accountability Review Board
An Oversight Considerations and Discussion Paper
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Current Issues:

The Office of Professional Accountability Review Board (OPARB) is currently interested in the development and implementation of a systematic approach to oversight and review of the OPA that reflects the OPARB mandate. This oversight responsibility includes both the review of OPA policy and protocol with a specific focus upon citizen complaint process.

As part of the initial oversight effort, the OPARB is receiving and reviewing selected Office of Professional Accountability (OPA) complaint cases. While useful as a means for orientation, the OPARB recognizes the need for a systematic review process that includes a methodology for case selection, and an analytical framework for meaningful case review and assessment. Finally, it may be useful to consider a yet a second framework for oversight that would identify OPA policy and protocol areas for review and to craft specific review processes to facilitate this form of oversight. This oversight, while perhaps related to case review, would have a more "macro" orientation and focus upon the "sociology" of citizen complaints in Seattle linking policy, protocol with knowledge.

Case Selection Methodology: Currently the OPARB is reviewing approximately 10% of the complaint cases that have been received, processed and closed by the OPA. The OPA is currently selecting every 10th case and forwarding the case to the OPARB after conducting, by hand, a redaction process. This methodology would be strengthened by implementation of the following process:

Step 1. OPA send to the OPARB a roster of the case numbers of all cases received during a standard reporting period (i.e. last quarter). This roster can be subcategorized by complaint type.

Step 2. OPA send to the OPARB a roster of all the case numbers closed during the standard reporting period.

Step 3. OPARB give all closed cases (second list) a discrete number 1 – N.

Step 4. Using a calculator, generate a roster of random numbers to reflect the desired sample size (desired % of total closed cases during the reporting period).

Step 5. Match the assigned numbers (step 3) with the generated roster of random numbers (step 4).

Step 6. Request the OPA cases by the OPA case number (step 2) that correspond to the matched numbers (step 5).

This approach creates greater independent case overview (step 1) and selection by the OPARB based upon a truly random process for selecting cases. This process could be further refined by conducting the case selection process for each category of cases to provide a more specific selection and review process that is sensitive to complaint categories.

Case Analysis Framework: While the OPARB is currently reviewing selected cases, there is a need for a framework to guide analysis and review. Currently there is no frame of reference for reviewing individual cases. Such a framework should reflect recognized professional compliance standards for complaint review that are based upon data driven parameters. These standards might include but not be limited to:

Process Assessment: an evaluation of compliance with an established step by step process documented process (policy and procedure manual or check list).

Investigation Assessment: an evaluation of the investigation methods used in a specific case against recognized investigation standards.

-Duration of Investigation (time)
-Interview protocols (non-leading questions, "core" question approach)
-Evidence matrix (consideration of all relevant evidence)

Determination Assessment: an evaluation of the conclusions of the investigation

-Evidence based findings (does the evidence support the findings)
-Accurate classification of findings

Consequence Assessment: an evaluation of the after finding actions.

-Does corrective action fit the findings (individual based)
-Implications for organizational protocol
-Implications for organizational policy

Professional Accountability and Citizen Complaint Trends and Dynamics.
The OPARB while interested in the review of individual cases, is also most interested in oversight of the professional accountability system. This system is

defined by both organizational protocol <u>and</u> the underlying dynamics of citizen complaints. To conduct a meaningful review at this level, a knowledge management system that is based upon the collection and analysis of aggregate data is required. Ideally this data is being collected and managed by the Office of Professional Accountability. Based upon the systematic collection of meaningful data it is possible to establish normative trends and analysis of the complaint dynamic. Such an analysis can be crafted to address a wide range of issues that explain the nature of complaints against the police to include factors that predict and possibly could reduce complaints.

Key questions that could be addressed by this type of over view might include but not be limited to:

1. The geography of citizen complaints: Which areas in Seattle produce the most complaints? The least? What are the characteristics of these areas? Etc.
2. Do a small number of complainants account for a large number of complaints?
3. Do a small number of officers account for a large number of complaints?
4. What is the mean number of complaints for a Seattle police officer?
5. What types of complaints are most frequent in which areas in Seattle?
6. Does the type and nature of evidence predict the findings of police complaints?
7. What are the social issues that surround complaints?
8. Does time of year and/or other factors such as community events predict citizen complaints?
9. Does officer duty assignment relate to the nature of complaints?
10. What is the cost (measured in a variety of ways) of complaints?

It might be most useful to arrange a meeting with the staff of the Office of Professional Accountability to discuss the issues and points covered in this discussion paper. Such a session should be both a fact finding session (what data is collected, how is it categorized, is it available etc.) and brain storming session (how can we develop the knowledge necessary to craft a cutting edge Professional Accountability Review process).